

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

By this amendment, claims 2-7, 10-13, and 15-19 are amended. Claims 1, 8, 9, and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 20-22 are added. Accordingly, claims 3-7, 10-13, and 15-22 are pending in the present application.

The specification has been amended in further conformance to U.S. practice. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3-7, 9-13, and 15-19 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants do not agree with the rejection of claims 1, 2, 8, and 14. However, in an effort to place the application in condition for allowance, claim 3 is rewritten in independent form to include the features of claims 1 and 2, and claim 7 is rewritten in independent form to include the features of claim 1. In accordance with the Examiner's assertion that claims 3 and 7 contain allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3 and 7, as well as each claim depending therefrom, are allowable.

The claims have also been amended, without changing the scope of protection, to further conform the claims to U.S. practice and to provide antecedent basis for all the recited features. Claim 2 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 7 and is allowable by virtue of its dependency therefrom, as well as because claim 2 has the same scope as allowable previously-presented claim 9.

New Claims

New claims 20 and 21 contain features related to allowable claim 3, and include features of previously-presented claim 3 which were identified as being allowable. Claim 22 contains features related to claim 2 and is allowable by virtue of its dependency from allowable claim 7 and on its own merits. Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 20-22 are therefore allowable, in addition to claims 2-7, 10-13, and 15-19.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

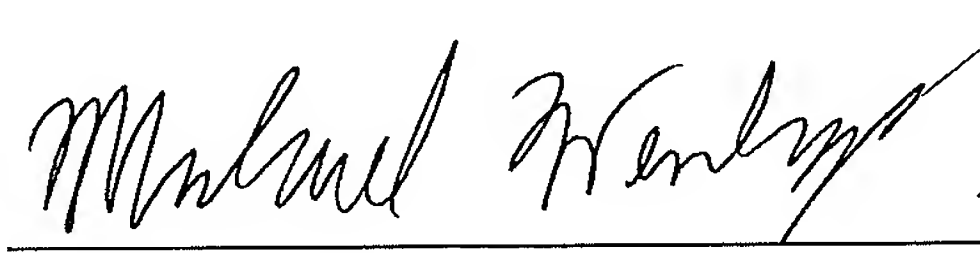
In the event that there are any questions concerning this amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned so that prosecution of present application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

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